

Approved December 11, 2012

**College of Arts and Sciences
COMMITTEE ON THE CURRICULUM**

**Meeting Minutes
November 27, 2012**

Present: Andy Bernstein, Jerusha Detweiler-Bedell, Jeff Feld-Gore, Jim Grant, Judy Finch, Tuajuanda Jordan, Dan Kelley, Peter Kennedy, Joel Martinez, Bethe Scalett, Freddy Vilches, Sara Rangel, Julia Yeckes, Tamara Ko, recorder.

Guest: Paul Powers, Director of Exploration & Discovery

The meeting was convened at 3:32pm.

I. General Education Discussion

Director Powers has met with the Steering Committee, who agree on electronically releasing the current version of the Exploration & Discovery review (along with an executive summary) to the general faculty by this Friday. The Committee did mention that there is some concern with the tone of its response to the review, and that an outside party may find it to be on the defensive side. However, the idea of redacting the response seems counterproductive, and it is clear that the Committee was only serving as a scrutinizer of the external review. Director Powers' understanding of the Committee's response is that while there is agreement on the review process having been flawed, it is not serious enough to undermine the value of the final product.

Given the delicate nature of the last faculty meeting, Director Powers hopes to resolve the question about the review process and make it more transparent for everyone. Dean Jordan said the best way to respond would be to distribute the aforementioned materials and then inform the faculty of the next immediate steps.

It is Co-Chair Martinez's understanding and hope that Director Powers' presentation will help to demonstrate the complexity of the situation to the faculty. Associate Dean Grant said it is important to remind the faculty of the new general education structure and to then open discussion. Professor Bernstein added that it is important that people know that general education and core need to be discussed in tandem prior to new revisions being implemented. The spirit of the steering committee is to be careful with any change at the moment because it could actually worsen the present situation.

Co-Chair Martinez pointed out that the Committee will need to talk about general education within its own discussions and determine a timeline. Will the implementation of the new general

education requirements be postponed? Should they be postponed again? Professor Scalettar asked Director Powers whether he viewed the core classes as having been successful. He responded that he has not heard of anyone lamenting the absence of Inventing America and that many other institutions do struggle with their first-year curriculum. Associate Dean Grant informed the Committee that a main criticism of Basic Inquiry was that it was content light and process heavy. Professor Bernstein encouraged members to review the data he gathered from the archives on Basic Inquiry.

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell asked the Committee what additional information would be needed in order to make a decision on core and general education. Professor Scalettar personally would like to see more numbers for data – how many core classes are being offered over the two semesters? Professor Kennedy himself hopes to have more information about the current groupings in general education – what do the arts & humanities, and social sciences really represent? Knowing that will help him to find courses that can fit across those silos and then fold E&D into the curriculum. Additionally, he had assumed that the Committee was dealing explicitly with general education alone; if E&D is going to be a priority for the Committee, then this will need to be made very clear.

Co-Chair Martinez does not see either E&D or general education happening first; rather, they are tied together. If the Committee can articulate guiding principles, values, and ideas behind AH and SS, then maybe it will be easier to see how the overall curricula line up. Director Powers added that such requirements need to be justified to the students. Why are they being required to enroll in these courses and produce such results?

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell asked whether it is true that the Committee believes E&D and general education must be coordinated together. If so, then it is possible that the implementation of general education would need to be delayed but that the Committee would move forward with continuing conversations and seeing where those land.

Dean Jordan reiterated the fact that something called the CORE cannot be separated from general education. If people do not understand or know what core is, then that must be defined before implementing general education. There is no reason to rush implementing the new general education requirements since there is nothing seriously wrong with the current structure. The faculty voted to separate the two areas but it is becoming clearer that this should not have occurred.

Ms. Yeckes does not understand why E&D underwent an external review if there was not a predetermined notion of what people hoped the final curriculum to be. Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell responded that it was an agreed timeline for when the program was originally created and that some people do see issues with the current structure.

Dean Jordan informed the Committee that the Admissions Office uses the core program as a selling point for prospective students, as it is something unique to the College. Core remains a very important and integral part of the College as it is used to draw future students. It is even more important that people know what the core is and how exactly it fits into general education.

Discussion was postponed due to time constraints.

II. Major Declaration Discussion

Co-Chair Detweiler-Bedell's impression of last week's discussion was a favorable one as members seemed inclined to support a motion of moving the major declaration deadline sooner.

Registrar Finch said the easiest and most straightforward policy would be to require students to declare a major once they have earned 45 credits. First semester transfer students may be eligible for a one-semester extension and would need to see the Registrar's Office in order to apply.

Ms. Rangel sees very few issues with this motion, and commented that the majority of her peers had operated under the assumption that major declaration needed to happen by the end of sophomore year anyway.

Motion: Students are required to declare a major once 45 credits have been earned. First transfer students may be eligible for a one-semester extension; please see the Registrar's Office to apply.

This motion was unanimously approved.

III. Course Proposal Subcommittee

ECON 398 Behavioral Economics

This is a one-time course offering that needs no additional resources.

ENG 298 The Literature and History of Modern Ireland

This is the third and final time that this course will be offered. It was originally proposed as a team-taught course between Professors David Campion and John Callahan, and with Professor Callahan's upcoming retirement, the course will be phased out.

Dean Jordan did raise a concern about one-time course offerings being repeatedly offered on a temporary basis.

SOAN 498 Reading Theory through Ethnography

This is a one-time course offering that needs no additional resources.

The above course proposals were unanimously approved.

IV. Faculty Meeting Report

Co-Chairs Detweiler-Bedell and Martinez will be reporting on the Committee's endorsement of the classics studies major proposal and that inmates who complete an Inside Out course should be granted credit.

Co-Chair Martinez has been working with Professors Rob Kugler and Nick Smith, and will also be detailing the College's connection to Reed College and the advantages this will bring. Registrar Finch reminded the Committee that the 200 level courses would need to become a permanent part of the curriculum if the major gets official approval.

Additionally, the co-chairs will update the faculty on the progression of the general education discussion and remind them of the model that was originally approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm.